THE RIVALS;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN, ESQ.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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REMARKS.

The prologue to this comedy, delivered by the representative of a sergeant at law, addressing the audience, says—

" Your judgment given—your sentence must remain;
" No writ of error lies—to Drury Lane."

The event contradicted this declaration; for, on the first night of performance, this excellent comedy was hissed from the stage, and had to appeal again and again before the tribunal of the town, ere justice was administered in its cause, and it became a public favourite.

As if to atone for those glaring wrongs, which "The Rivals," on its first appearance, suffered, certain critics of the present day have pronounced the work equal, if not superior, in merit, to "The School for Scandal." This is repairing one injury by the commission of another—by defamation against the character of the best dramatic composition since Shakspeare wrote.

"The Rivals" is an elegant, an interesting, a humorous, and most entertaining comedy; but in neither fable, character, nor incident, is it, like "The School for Scandal,"—inimitable.

If Mrs. Malaprop, Acres, Sir Lucius, and some other personages, in this drama, were not upon the stage before "The Rivals" was acted, they have all

appeared there, in various dramas, many a time since. But where can Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, where can the Surface family be found, either in original or copy, except in "The School for Scandal?" Where can be traced the plot or events of that extraordinary play, or where even the shadows of them?

The perpetual flow of wit in "The School for Scandal" may familiarise it so much with some auditors, that they cannot be made sensible of its perfect enjoyment. Whereas, the sprinkling of wit and repartee with which "The Rivals" is occasionally enlivened, is easily distinguished, and more eagerly received, in consequence of its inferior pages.

Sir Anthony Absolute is generally counted the most prominent, though Faulkland is, no doubt, the most original, character in the comedy. One particular circumstance adds extreme interest to this part. It is supposed, by the author's most intimate friends, that, in delineating Faulkland, he took a discerning view of his own disposition, in all the anxious tenderness of a youthful lover; and has here accurately described every sentiment, every feeling, which, at that trying period of his life, agitated his troubled heart. The very town of Bath, just before the writing of this play, had been the identical scene of all his restless hopes and fears.

The impressive language, the refined notions, the enthusiastic, yet natural, passion of Faulkland for Julia, with all the captivating charms of mind and expression which has been here given to this object of adoration, are positive vouchers that some very ex-

alted idea of the force of love, if not its immediate power, over himself, had at that time possession of the poet's fancy.

With all his gifts of eloquence in writing the dialogue of these lovers, Mr. Sheridan was, however, at a loss for circumstances to incite them to speak; and, in that most interesting scene in the fourth act, he has borrowed his incident from the tale of Prior's "Nut-brown Maid."

The character of Lydia Languish is so justly drawn, that its only fault is, the want of stronger features: circumstances are deficient, in making her an example of proper importance to romantic ladies. Accidents might have been invented, that would have rendered her a much more pointed mark for ridicule.

Against the illiterate Mrs. Malaprop, common occurrence, and common sense, protest. That any Englishwoman, for these five hundred years past, in the habit of keeping good company, or any company, could have made use of the words—*extirpate* for *exculpate*, *exhort* for *escort*, and *malevolence* for *benevolence*, seems too far removed from probability, to make a reasonable auditor smile.

When future generations shall naturally suppose, that an author of Mr. Sheridan's reputation drew men and women exactly as he found them; this sketch of a woman of family and fortune, at the end of the eighteenth century, will assure the said generations—that the advance of female knowledge in Great Britain, was far more tardy, than in any other European nation.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY LANE.	COVENT GARDEN.
SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE	*Mr. Dowton.*	*Mr. Munden.*
CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE	*Mr. Barrymore.*	*Mr. C. Kemble.*
SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER	*Mr. Johnstone.*	*Mr. Waddy.*
FAULKLAND	*Mr. Elliston.*	*Mr. Brunton.*
ACRES	*Mr. Bannister.*	*Mr. Fawcett.*
FAG	*Mr. De Camp.*	*Mr. Farley.*
DAVID	*Mr. Purser.*	*Mr. Beverley.*
JAMES		*Mr. Lee.*
COACHMAN	*Mr. Maddocks.*	*Mr. Atkins.*
SERVANTS	*Mr. Webb*	*Mr. Sarjant.*
	Mr. Evans.	*Mr. L. Bologna.*
MRS. MALAPROP	*Miss Pope.*	*Mrs. Davenport.*
LYDIA LANGUISH	*Miss Mellon.*	*Mrs. Glover.*
JULIA	*Mrs. H. Siddons.*	*Mrs. H. Siddons.*
LUCY	*Mrs. Harlowe.*	*Mrs. Beverley.*
JENNY	*Mrs. Jones.*	*Mrs. Norton.*

SCENE—Bath.

THE RIVALS.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Street at Bath.

COACHMAN *crosses the Stage.—Enter* FAG, *looking after him.*

Fag. What! Thomas! Sure, 'tis he!—What! Thomas! Thomas!

Coachm. Hey! odd's life!—Mr. Fag! give us your hand, my old fellow servant!

Fag. Excuse my glove, Thomas; I'm devilish glad to see you, my lad! why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty!—but who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath?

Coachm. Sure, Master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs. Kate, and the postillion be all come.

Fag. Indeed!

Coachm. Ay: master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit, so he'd a mind to gi't the slip,—and whip! we we're all off at an hour's warning.

Fag. Ay, ay; hasty in every thing, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute.

Coachm. But tell us, Mr. Fag, how does young Master? Odd, Sir Anthony will stare, to see the captain here!

Fag. I do not serve Captain Absolute now.

Coachm. Why, sure!

Fag. At present, I am employed by Ensign Beverley.

Coachm. I doubt, Mr. Fag, you han't changed for the better.

Fag. I have not changed, Thomas.

Coachm. No! why, didn't you say, you had left young master?

Fag. No. Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle you no farther;—briefly then—Captain Absolute and Ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

Coachm. But, pray, why does your master pass only for ensign?—now, if he had shammed general, indeed——

Fag. Ah, Thomas! there lays the mystery o'the matter!—Harkye, Thomas, my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste—a lady, who likes him better as a half pay ensign, than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a year.

Coachm. That is an odd taste, indeed! but has she got the stuff, Mr. Fag? is she rich, eh?

Fag. Rich! why, I believe she owns half the stocks!—Z——s, Thomas, she could pay the national debt, as easily as I could my washerwoman!—She has a lapdog, that eats out of gold—she feeds her parrot with small pearls, and all her thread papers are made of bank notes!

Coachm. Bravo, faith!—Odd! I warrant she has a set of thousands, at least; but does she draw kindly with the captain?

Fag. As fond as pigeons.

Coachm. May one hear her name?

Fag. Miss Lydia Languish;—But there is an old tough aunt in the way—though, by the bye, she has never seen my master—for he got acquainted with Miss, while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

Coachm. Well, I wish they were once harnessed together in matrimony. But, pray, Mr. Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath? I ha' heard a great deal of it;—here's a mort o' merry making, eh?

Fag. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well—'tis a good lounge—but damn the place, I'm tired of it; their regular hours stupify me—not a fiddle or a card, after eleven! however, Mr. Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up a little, in private parties;—I'll introduce you there, Thomas, you'll like him much.—But, Thomas, you must polish a little—indeed, you must:—Here, now, this wig! what, the devil, do you do with a wig, Thomas? none of the London whips, of any degree of ton, wear wigs now.

Coachm. More's the pity, more's the pity, I say—Odds life! when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next. Odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the bar, I guessed 'twould mount to the box! but 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr. Fag: and lookye, I'll never gi' up mine, the lawyers, and doctors, may do as they will.

Fag. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

Coachm. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of they professions ben't all of a mind,— for in our village now, thoff Jack Gauge, the exciseman, has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick, the farrier, swears he'll never forsake his bob, though all the college should appear with their own heads!

Fag. Indeed! well said, Dick! but hold, mark—mark, Thomas.

Coachm. Zooks, 'tis the captain! Is that the lady with him?

Fag. No, no, that is Madam Lucy, my master's mistress's maid; they lodge at that house—but I must after him, to tell him the news.

Coachm. Odd, he's giving her money!—Well, Mr. Fag——

Fag. Good b'ye, Thomas; I have an appointment in Gyde's porch, this evening, at eight; meet me there, and we'll make a little party.

[*Exeunt, severally.*

SCENE II.

A Dresssing Room, in MRS. MALAPROP'S *Lodgings.*

LYDIA LANGUISH *sitting on a Sofa, with a Book in her Hand.*—LUCY, *as just returned from a Message.*

Lucy. Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it: I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath, I han't been at.

Lydia. And could not you get "The Reward of Constancy?"

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor "The Fatal Connexion?"

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor "The Mistakes of the Heart?"

Lucy. Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr. Bull said, Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away.

Lydia. Heigho! Did you inquire for "The Delicate Distress?"

Lucy. Or, "The Memoirs of Lady Woodford?" Yes, indeed, ma'am, I asked every where for it; and I might have brought it from Mr. Frederick's, but Lady Slattern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's eared it, it wan't fit for a Christian to read.

Lydia. Heigho! Yes, I always know when Lady Slattern has been before me; She has a most observing thumb, and, I believe, cherishes her nails, for the convenience of making marginal notes. Well, child, what have you brought me!

Lucy. Oh, here ma'am! [*Taking Books from under her Cloak, and from her Pockets.*] This is "The Man of Feeling," and this, "Peregrine Pickle"—Here are "The Tears of Sensibility," and "Humphrey Clinker.

Lydia. Hold!—here's some one coming—quick, see who it is—[*Exit* LUCY.]—Surely I heard my cousin, Julia's voice!

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Lud, ma'am! here is Miss Melville!

Lydia. Is it possible!

Enter JULIA.

Lydia. My dearest Julia, how delighted am I! [*Embrace.*] How unexpected was this happiness!

Julia. True, Lydia, and our pleasure is the greater; but what has been the matter? you were denied to me at first.

Lydia. Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you! but first inform me what has conjured you to Bath?—Is Sir Anthony here?

Julia. He is; we are arrived within this hour, and I suppose he will be here to wait on Mrs. Malaprop as soon as he is dressed.

Lydia. Then before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress; I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, though your prudence may condemn me: My letters have informed you of my whole connexion with Beverley; but I have lost him, Julia;—my aunt has discovered our intercourse, by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since; Yet, would you believe it? she has

fallen absolutely in love with a tall, Irish baronet, she met one night, since we have been here, at Lady Macshuffle's rout.

Julia. You jest, Lydia!

Lydia. No, upon my word—She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chuses to be known to him;—but it is a Delia, or a Celia, I assure you.

Julia. Then, surely, she is now more indulgent to her niece?

Lydia. Quite the contrary; Since she has discovered her own frailty, she is become more suspicious of mine.—Then I must inform you of another plague; That odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day, so that, I protest, I shall be teised out of all spirits!

Julia. Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best:—Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs. Malaprop.

Lydia. But you have not heard the worst;—Unfortunately I had quarrelled with my poor Beverley, just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since, to make it up.

Julia. What was his offence?

Lydia. Nothing at all; but I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel; and, somehow, I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity; so, last Thursday, I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself, that Beverley was, at that time, paying his addresses to another woman.—I signed it, "Your friend unknown", showed it to Beverley, charged him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vowed I'd never see him more.

Julia. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since?

Lydia. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out; I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever.

Julia. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have

represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia, you tell me he is but an ensign, —and you have thirty thousand pounds!

Lydia. But, you know, I lose most of my fortune, if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determined to do, ever since I knew the penalty; nor could I love the man, who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

Julia. Nay, this is caprice!

Lydia. What, does Julia tax me with caprice? I thought her lover Faulkland had inured her to it.

Julia. I do not love even his faults.

Lydia. But a-propos! you have sent to him, I suppose?

Julia. Not yet, upon my word! nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath—Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden, I could not inform him of it.

Lydia. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress, though under the protection of Sir Anthony; yet, have you, for this long year, been a slave to the caprice, the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the right of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

Julia. Nay, you are wrong entirely—We were contracted before my father's death: That, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed, what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish—He is too generous to trifle on such a point—and, for his character, you wrong him there too.—No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble, to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness. Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover.—This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours; but I have learned to think myself his debtor, for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

Lydia. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him; but, tell me, candidly, Julia—had he never saved your life, do you think you should have been attached to him as you are? Believe me, the rude blast that overset your boat, was a prosperous gale of love to him.

Julia. Gratitude may have strengthened my attachment to Mr. Faulkland, but I loved him before he had preserved me; yet, surely, that alone were an obligation sufficient——

Lydia. Obligation! Why, a water spaniel would have done as much! Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man, because he could swim!

Julia. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

Lydia. Nay, I do but jest.— What's here?

Enter LUCY, *in a hurry.*

Lucy. O ma'am, here is Sir Anthony Absolute, just come home with your aunt!

Lydia. They'll not come here—Lucy, do you watch. [*Exit* LUCY.

Julia. Yet I must go; Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to show me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs. Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chuses, with her select words, so ingeniously misapplied, without being mispronounced.

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. O lud, ma'am! they are both coming up stairs!

Lydia. Well, I'll not detain you, Coz.—Adieu, my dear Julia! I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland.—There—through my room you'll find another staircase.

Julia. Adieu! *Exit* JULIA.

Lydia. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books.—

Quick, quick.—Fling "Peregrine Pickle" under the toilet—throw "Roderick Random" into the closet—put "The Innocent Adultery" into "The Whole Duty of Man"—thrust "Lord Aimworth" under the sofa—cram "Ovid" behind the bolster—there put "The Man of Feeling" into your pocket—so, so; now lay "Mrs. Chapone" in sight, and leave "Fordyce's Sermons" open on the table.

Lucy. O, burn it, ma'am! the hairdresser has torn away as far as "Proper Pride".

Lydia. Never mind—open at "Sobriety"—Fling me "Lord Chesterfield's Letters."——Now for them!

Enter MRS. MALAPROP *and* SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

Mrs. M. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton, who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lydia. Madam, I thought you once——

Mrs. M. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all: Thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow—to illiterate him, I say, from your memory.

Lydia. Ah, madam! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not so easy to forget.

Mrs. M. But, I say, it is, miss! there is nothing on earth so easy, as to forget, if a person chuses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle, as if he had never existed, and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Sir Anth. Why, sure, she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not! ay, this comes of her reading!

Lydia. What crime, madam, have I committed, to be treated thus?

Mrs. M. Now don't attempt to extirpate youself

from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible of it: But tell me, will you promise to do as you're bid? Will you take a husband of your friend's chusing?

Lydia. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs. M. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest, in matrimony, to begin with a little aversion. I am sure, I hated your poor, dear uncle, before marriage, as if he'd been a black-a-moor; and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made! and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed! But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

Lydia. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs. M. Take yourself to your room: You are fit company for nothing but your own illhumours.

Lydia. Willingly, ma'am; I cannot change for the worse. [*Exit.*

Mrs. M. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am; all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven, I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

Mrs. M. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy!

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library; she had a book in each hand—they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers; From

that moment, I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress!

Mrs. M. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is, as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge!—It blossoms through the year! And, depend on it, Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs. M. Fie, fie, Sir Anthony! you surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation, now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs. M. Observe me, Sir Anthony—I would by no means wish a daughter of mine, to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman—for instance—I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or Algebra, or Simony, or Fluxions, or Paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning: nor would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments; but, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts; and, as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries; but, above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mispell, and mispronounce, words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise, that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying.—This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know; and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess, that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say, is on my

side of the question.—But, Mrs. Malaprop, to the more important point in debate,—you say, you have no objection to my proposal.

Mrs. M. None, I assure you.—I am under no positive engagement with Mr. Acres; and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly.—He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs. M. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side.

Sir Anth. Objection!—let him object, if he dare! —No, no, Mrs. Malaprop; Jack knows, that the least demur puts me in a phrenzy directly. My process was always very simple—in their younger days, 'twas, 'Jack, do this,'—if he demurred, I knocked him down; and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs. M. Ay, and the properest way, o'my conscience!—nothing is so conciliating to young people, as severity.—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr. Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations; and I hope you will represent her to to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently. Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl—take my advice, keep a tight hand—if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about. [*Exit* SIR ANTHONY.

Mrs. M. Well, at any rate, I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. She has somehow discovered my partiality for Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Sure,

Lucy can't have betrayed me!—No, the girl is such a simpleton, I should have made her confess it.—Lucy! Lucy! [*Calls.*] Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Did you call, ma'am?

Mrs. M. Yes, girl.—Did you see Sir Lucius while you was out?

Lucy. No indeed, ma'am, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs. M. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned——

Lucy. O gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out!

Mrs. M. Well, don't let your simplicity be imposed on.

Lucy. No, ma'am.

Mrs. M. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to Sir Lucius—but mind, Lucy, if ever you betray what you are intrusted with, (unless it be other people's secrets to me), you forfeit my malevolence for ever: and your being a simpleton, shall be no excuse for your locality. [*Exit.*

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! So, my dear simplicity, let me give you a little respite; [*Altering her Manner.*] let girls, in my station, be as fond as they please of being expert, and knowing in their trusts; commend me to a mask of silliness, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it!—Let me see to what account have I turned my simplicity lately: [*Looks at a Paper.*] *For abetting Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an ensign! in money, sundry times, twelve pound twelve—gowns, five; hats, ruffles, caps, &c. &c. numberless.—From the said ensign, within this last month, six guineas and a half.*—About a quarter's pay! —*Item, from Mrs. Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her*—when I found matters were likely to be discovered,—*two guineas, and a black padusoy.—Item,*

from Mr. Acres, for carrying divers letters—which I never delivered—*two guineas, and a pair of buckles.*—*Item, from Sir Lucius O'Trigger, three crowns, two gold pocketpieces, and a silver snuff-box!*—Well done, simplicity! yet I was forced to make my Hibernian believe, that he was corresponding, not with the aunt, but with the niece: for, though not over rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy, to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman, to the necessities of his fortune. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE'S *Lodgings.*

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *and* FAG.

Fag. Sir, while I was there, Sir Anthony came in I told him, you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

Capt. Abs. And what did he say, on hearing I was at Bath?

Fag. Sir, in my life, I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished!

Capt. Abs. Well, sir, and what did you say?

Fag. O, I lied, Sir—I forget the precise lie, but you may depend on't, he got no truth from me.—Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I

should be glad to fix what has brought us to Bath: in order that we may lie a little consistently.—Sir Anthony's servants were curious, sir, very curious indeed.

Capt. Abs. You have said nothing to them?——

Fag. Oh, not a word, Sir—not a word.—Mr. Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)—

Capt. Abs. 'Sdeath!—you rascal! you have not trusted him!

Fag. Oh, no, sir—no—no—not a syllable, upon my veracity!—He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, sir—devilish sly!—My master (said I) honest Thomas (you know, sir, one says honest to one's inferiors) is come to Bath to recruit—yes, sir—I said to recruit—and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else.

Capt. Abs. Well—recruit will do—let it be so—

Fag. Oh, sir, recruit will do surprisingly—indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas, that your honour had already inlisted, five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard markers.

Capt. Abs. You blockhead, never say more than is necessary.

Fag. I beg pardon, sir—I beg pardon—But with submission, a lie is nothing, unless one supports it.—Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge endorsements as well as the bill.

Capt. Abs. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit, by offering too much security. Is Mr. Faulkland returned?

Fag. He is above, sir, changing his dress.

Capt. Abs. Can you tell whether he has been informed of Sir Anthony's and Miss Melville's arrival?

Fag. I fancy not, sir; he has seen no one since he came in, but his gentleman, who was with

him at Bristol.—I think, sir, I hear Mr. Faulkland coming down——

Capt. Abs. Go, tell him, I am here.

Fag. Yes, sir—[*Going.*] I beg pardon, sir, but should Sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember, that we are recruiting, if you please.

Capt. Abs. Well, well.

Fag. And in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I shall esteem it as an obligation;—for though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be found out. [*Exit.*

Capt. Abs. Now for my whimsical friend—If he does not know that his mistress is here, I'll tease him a little before I tell him——

Enter FAG.

Fag. Mr. Faulkland, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter FAULKLAND.

Capt. Abs. Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again: you are punctual in your return.

Faulk. Yes; I had nothing to detain me, when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? How stand matters between you and Lydia?

Capt. Abs. 'Faith, much as they were; I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled evey hour.

Faulk. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once?

Capt. Abs. What, and lose two thirds of her fortune? You forget that, my friend.—No, no, I could have brought her to that long ago.

Faulk. Nay, then, you trifle too long—if you are sure of her, propose to the aunt, in your own character, and write to Sir Anthony, for his consent.

Capt. Abs. Softly, softly, for though I am convinced

my little Lydia would elope with me as Ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune on my side; well, but Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the hotel?

Faulk. Indeed, I cannot; I am not in spirits to be of such a party.

Capt. Abs. By Heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover!—Do love like a man.

Faulk. Ah! Jack, your heart and soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on one only object.—You throw for a large stake, but, losing—you could stake, and throw again:—but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed, were to be stripped of all.

Capt. Abs. But, for Heaven's sake! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present?

Faulk. What grounds for apprehension, did you say? Heavens! are there not a thousand! I fear for her spirits—her health—her life—O! Jack, when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension!

Capt. Abs. Ay, but we may chuse whether we will take the hint or not.—So then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia were well, and in spirits, you would be entirely content?

Faulk. I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

Capt. Abs. Then cure your anxiety at once—Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath.

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

Capt. Abs. She is arrived here, with my father, within this hour.

Faulk. Can you be serious?

Capt. Abs. I thought you knew Sir Anthony better, than to be surprised at a sudden whim of this kind.—Seriously then, it is as I tell you—upon my honour.

Faulk. My dear Jack—now nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, Mr. Acres, just arrived, is below.

Capt. Abs. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of Sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, show the gentleman up. [*Exit* FAG.

Faulk. What, is he much acquainted in the family?

Capt. Abs. Oh, very intimate: He is likewise a rival of mine—that is, of my other self's, for he does not think his friend, Captain Absolute, ever saw the lady in question;—and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of one Beverley, a concealed, sculking rival, who—

Faulk. Hush!—He's here!

Enter ACRES.

Acres. Hah! my dear friend, noble Captain, and honest Jack, how dost thou? just arrived, 'faith, as you see.—Sir, your humble servant. Warm work on the roads, Jack—odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a comet, with a tail of dust all the way, as long as the Mall.

Capt. Abs. Ah! Bob, you are indeed an eccentric planet, but we know your attraction hither—give me leave to introduce Mr. Faulkland to you; Mr. Faulkland, Mr. Acres.

Acres. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you:

sir, I solicit your connexions.—Hey, Jack—what this is Mr. Faulkland, who——

Capt. Abs. Ay, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr. Faulkland.

Acres. Ah! Mr. Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man!

Faulk. I have not seen Miss Melville yet, sir,—I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire?

Acres. Never knew her better in my life, sir,—never better.—Odd's blushes and blooms! she has been as healthy as the German spa.

Faulk. Indeed!—I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

Acres. False, false, sir—only said to vex you: quite the reverse, I assure you.

Faulk. There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me; I had almost fretted myself ill.

Capt. Abs. Now are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick.

Faulk. No, no, you misunderstand me:—yet surely a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love.—Now confess—isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health?

Capt. Abs. Oh, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence to be sure!

Acres. Good apartments, Jack.

Faulk. Well, sir, but you was saying that Miss Melville has been so exceedingly well—what then she has been merry and gay I suppose?—always in spirits hey?

Acres. Merry, odds crickets! she has been the bell and spirit of the company, wherever she has been—so lively and entertaining! so full of wit and humour!

Faulk. By my soul! there is an innate levity in woman, that nothing can overcome.—What! happy, and I away!

Capt. Abs. Just now you were only apprehensive for your mistress's spirits.

Faulk. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company?

Capt. Abs. No indeed, you have not.

Faulk. Have I been lively and entertaining?

Capt. Abs. Oh, upon my word, I acquit you.

Faulk. Have I been full of wit and humour?

Capt. Abs. No, 'faith, to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid, indeed.

Acres. What's the matter with the gentleman?

Capt. Abs. He is only expressing his great satisfaction, at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy —that's all—hey, Faulkland?

Faulk. Yes, yes, she has a happy disposition!

Acres. That she has, indeed—then she is so accomplished—so sweet a voice—so expert at her harpsichord—such a mistress of flat and sharp, squallante, rumblante, and quiverante!—there was this time month—odds minnums and crotchets! how she did chirup at Mrs. Piano's concert!

Faulk. Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! 'Sdeath! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle! to sooth her light heart with catches and glees!—What can you say to this, sir?

Capt. Abs. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, sir.

Faulk. Nay, nay, nay—I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no, I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad or sick—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not?

Acres. What does the gentleman say about dancing?

Capt. Abs. He says the lady we speak of, dances as well as she sings.

Acres. Ay truly, does she—there was at our last race ball——

Faulk. Hell and the devil! There! there—I told you so! I told you so! oh! she thrives in my absence!—dancing! but her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine;—I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness.—She has been all health! spirit! laugh! song! dance!—oh! d—ned, d—ned levity!

Capt. Abs. For Heaven's sake! Faulkland, don't expose yourself so.—Suppose she has danced, what then?—does not the ceremony of society often oblige—

Faulk. Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps, as you say—for form sake.—What, Mr. Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a minuet—hey?

Acres. Oh, I dare insure her for that—but what I was going to speak of, was her country dancing:—odds swimmings! she has such an air with her!—

Faulk. Now disappointment on her!—defend this, Absolute, why don't you defend this?—country dances! jiggs, and reels! am I to blame now? a minuet I could have forgiven—I should not have minded that—I say, I should not have regarded a minuet—but country dances! Z——ds! had she made one in a cotillion—I believe I could have forgiven even that—but to be monkey led for a night!—to run the gauntlet, through a string of amorous palming puppies!—to show paces, like a managed filly!—Oh, Jack, there never can be but one man in the world, whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a country dânce; and even then, the rest of the couples should be her great uncles and aunts!

Capt. Abs. Ay, to be sure! grandfathers and grandmothers!

Faulk. If there be but one vicious mind in the set, it will spread like a contagion—the action of their pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jigg—

their quivering, warm breathed sighs impregnate the air—the atmosphere becomes electrical to love, and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain!—I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried—and that confounded looby has perceived it. [*Going*.

Capt. Abs. Nay, but stay, Faulkland, and thank Mr. Acres for his good news.

Faulk. D—n his news! [*Exit*.

Capt. Abs. Ha! ha! ha! poor Faulkland! five minutes since—"nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!"

Acres. The gentleman wasn't angry at my praising his mistress, was he?

Capt. Abs. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

Acres. You don't say so? Ha! ha! jealous of me! —that's a good joke!

Capt. Abs. There's nothing strange in that, Bob; let me tell you, that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of yours will do some mischief among the girls here.

Acres. Ah! you joke—ha! ha! mischief—ha! ha! but you know I am not my own property, my dear Lydia has forestalled me.—She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly—but odds frogs and tambours! I shan't take matters so here—now ancient Madam has no voice in it—I'll make my old clothes know who's master—I shall straitway cashier the hunting frock—and render my leather breeches incapable—My hair has been in training some time.

Capt. Abs. Indeed!

Acres. Ay—and thoff the side curls are a little restive, my hind part takes it very kindly.

Capt. Abs. Oh, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely I propose so—then if I can find out this Ensign Beverly, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

Capt. Abs. Spoke like a man—but pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing——

Acres. Ha! ha! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, isn't it?—I didn't invent it myself, though; but a commander in our militia—a great scholar, I assure you—says that there is no meaning in the common oaths, and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable;—because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say, by Jove! or by Bacchus! or by Mars! or by Venus! or by Pallas! according to the sentiment—so that to swear with propriety, says my little Major, the "oath should be an echo to the sense;" and this we call the oath referential, or sentimental swearing—ha! ha ha! 'tis genteel, isn't it?

Capt. Abs. Very genteel, and very new indeed—and I dare say will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

Acres. Ay, ay, the best terms will grow obsolete—Damns have had their day.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, there is a gentleman below, desires to see you— Shall I show him into the parlour?

Capt. Abs. Ay—you may.

Acres. Well, I must begone——

Capt. Abs. Stay; who is it, Fag?

Fag. Your father, sir.

Capt. Abs. You puppy, why didn't you show him up directly? [*Exit* FAG.

Acres. You have business with Sir Anthony.—I expect a message from Mrs. Malaprop, at my lodgings. I have sent also to my dear friend, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.—Adieu, Jack, we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

Capt. Abs. That I will, with all my heart. [*Exit.* ACRES.] Now for a parental lecture—I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here—I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

Enter SIR ANTHONY.

Sir, I am delighted to see you here; and looking so well!—your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack,—What, you are recruiting here, hey?

Capt. Abs. Yes, sir, I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it; for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business.—Jack; I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

Capt. Abs. Pardon me, sir, I never saw you look more strong and hearty, and I pray frequently that you may continue so.

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard, with all my heart. Well then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty, I may continue to plague you a long time.—Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance, for a lad of your spirit.

Capt. Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world.—I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Capt. Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me.—Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. Oh! that shall be as your wife chuses.

Capt. Abs. My wife, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, ay, settle that between you—settle that between you.

Capt. Abs. A wife, sir, did you say?

Sir Anth. Ay, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

Capt. Abs. Not a word of her, sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I mustn't forget her though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by a marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference?

Capt. Abs. Sir! sir!—you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

Capt. Abs. I was, sir,—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

Sir Anth. Why—what difference does that make? Odd's life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

Capt. Abs. Pray, sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Capt. Abs. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you, to object to a lady you know nothing of.

Capt. Abs. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Harkye, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool,—quite cool; but take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led—when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a phrenzy.

Capt. Abs. Sir, I must repeat it—in this I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now d—n me! if ever I call you Jack again, while I live!

Capt. Abs. Nay, sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word! not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't by——

Capt. Abs. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness! to——

Sir Anth. Z—ds! sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I chuse: she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's Museum—she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet I'll make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night, to write sonnets on her beauty.

Capt. Abs. This is reason and moderation indeed!

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

Capt. Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, sir, I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Capt. Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, sir! none of your violence, if you please—It won't do with me, I promise you.

Capt. Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

Capt. Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word.

Sir Anth. So you will fly out! can't you be cool, like me? What the devil good can passion do!——passion is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate!—There, you sneer again!—don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog! you play upon the

meekness of my disposition? Yet take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do every thing on earth that I chuse, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you—If not, z——ds! don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and d—n me! if ever I call you Jack again! [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

The North Parade.

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Sir Lucius is generally more punctual, when he expects to hear from his dear Delia, as he calls her:—I wonder he's not here!—

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir L. Hah! my little embassadress—upon my conscience I have been looking for you; I have been on the South Parade this half hour.

Lucy. [*Speaking simply.*] O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship, here on the North.

Sir L. 'Faith!—may be, that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical too, how you could go out, and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap, at the Parade coffee-house, and I chose the window, on purpose that I might not miss you.

Lucy. My stars! Now I'd wager a sixpence I went by, while you were asleep.

Sir L. Sure enough it must have been so—and I never dreamt it was so late, till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

Lucy. Yes, but I have—I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

Sir L. O 'faith! I guessed you weren't come empty-handed—well—let me see what the dear creature says.

Lucy. There, Sir Lucius. [*Gives him a Letter.*

Sir L. [Reads.] *Sir—there is often a sudden incentive impulse in love, that has a greater induction than years of domestic combination: such was the commotion I felt at the first superfluous view of Sir Lucius O'Trigger.* Very pretty, upon my word! *Female punctuation forbids me to say more; yet, let me add, that it will give me joy infallible to find Sir Lucius worthy the last criterion of my affections.* DELIA.

Upon my conscience, Lucy, your lady is a great mistress of language! 'Faith! she's quite the queen of the dictionary!

Lucy. Ay, sir, a lady of her experience.

Sir L. Experience! what, at seventeen?

Lucy. O, true, sir—but then she reads so—my stars! how she will read off hand!

Sir L. 'Faith, she must be very deep read, to write this way—though she is rather an arbitrary writer, too—for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their habeas corpus from any court in Christendom. However, when affection guides the pen, he must be a brute, who finds fault with the style.

Lucy. Ah! Sir Lucius, If you were to hear how she talks of you!

Sir L. Oh, tell her, I'll make her the best husband

in the world, and Lady O'Trigger into the bargain! —But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent—and do every thing fairly.

Lucy. Nay, Sir Lucius, I thought you wa'nt rich enough to be so nice!

Sir L. Upon my word, young woman, you have hit it:—I am so poor, that I can't afford to do a dirty action.—If I did not want money, I'd steal your mistress, and her fortune, with a great deal of pleasure. —However my pretty girl, [*Gives her Money.*] here's a little something, to buy you a ribband; and meet me in the evening, and I will give you an answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss beforehand, to put you in mind. [*Kisses her.*

Lucy. O lud! Sir Lucius—I never seed such a gemman! My lady won't like you if you're so impudent.

Sir L. 'Faith she will, Lucy—that same—pho! what's the name of it!—modesty!—is a quality in a lover more praised by the women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether Sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her fifty—my dear.

Lucy. What, would you have me tell her a lie?

Sir L. Ah then, you baggage! I'll make it a truth presently.

Lucy. For shame now; here is some one coming.

Sir L. O 'faith I'll quiet your conscience!

[*Sees* FAG.—*Exit, humming a Tune.*

Enter FAG.

Fag. So, so, ma'am. I humbly beg pardon.

Lucy. O lud!—now, Mr. Fag—you flurry one so!

Fag. Come, come, Lucy, here's no one by—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please—You play false with us, madam—I saw you give the baronet a letter.—My master shall know this—and if he don't call him out—I will.

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha: you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty!—That letter was from Mrs. Malaprop, simpleton.—She is taken with Sir Lucius's address.

Fag. How! what tastes some people have! Why, I suppose I have walked by her window a hundred times. But what says our young lady?—Any message to my master?

Lucy. Sad news, Mr. Fag! A worse rival than Acres! Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

Fag. What, Captain Absolute?

Lucy. Even so. I overheard it all.

Fag. Ha! ha! ha! very good, 'faith! Good b'ye, Lucy, I must away with this news.

Lucy. Well, you may laugh, but it is true, I assure you. [*Going.*] But, Mr. Fag, tell your master not to be cast down by this.

Fag. Oh, he'll be so disconsolate!

Lucy. And charge him, not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

Fag. Never fear—never fear.

Lucy. Be sure, bid him keep up his spirits.

Fag. We will—we will. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The North Parade.

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed!—Whimsical enough, 'faith! My father wants to

force me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with! He must not know of my connexion with her yet awhile. He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters, however I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed; but I can assure him, it is very sincere—— So, so, here he comes—he looks plaguy gruff!

[*Steps aside.*

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

Sir Anth. No—I'll die sooner than forgive him! Die, did I say? I'll live these fifty years, to plague him. At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper—An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters! for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a-year, besides his pay, ever since! But I have done with him—he's any body's son for me—I never will see him more——never—never—never—never.

Capt. Abs. Now for a penitential face!

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way!

Capt. Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Capt. Abs. A sincere penitent. I am come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that?

Capt. Abs. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

Sir Anth. Well, sir?

Capt. Abs. I have been likewise weighing, and balancing, what you were pleased to mention, concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, puppy?

Capt. Abs. Why, then, sir, the result of my reflec-

tions is, a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why, now you talk sense, absolute sense; I never heard any thing more sensible in my life. Confound you! you shall be Jack again.

Capt. Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why, then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you who the lady really is. Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare. What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

Capt. Abs. Languish? What, the Languishes of Worcestershire?

Sir Anth. Worcestershire! no. Did you never meet Mrs. Malaprop, and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

Capt. Abs. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay, I think I do recollect something—Languish—Languish——She squints, don't she?—A little redhaired girl?

Sir Anth. Squints!—A red-haired girl! Z—ds! no!

Capt. Abs. Then I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

Capt. Abs. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent; if I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! Not a glance but speaks and kindles, some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! O Jack, lips, smiling at their own discretion! and, if not smiling, more sweetly

pouting—more lovely in sullenness! Then, Jack, her neck! O Jack! Jack!

Capt. Abs. And which is to be mine, sir, the niece, or the aunt?

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you. When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The aunt, indeed! Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched any thing old, or ugly, to gain an empire.

Capt. Abs. Not to please your father, sir?

Sir Anth. To please my father——Z—ds! not to please—O, my father—Oddso!—yes, yes; if my father, indeed, had desired—that's quite another matter——Though he wasn't the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

Capt. Abs. I dare say not, sir.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful?

Capt. Abs. Sir, I repeat it, if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind—now, without being very nice, I own I should rather chuse a wife of mine, to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back: and, though one eye may be very agreeable, yet, as the prejudice has always run in favour of two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is! Why, sirrah, you are an anchorite! A vile, insensible stock! You a soldier! you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on! Odds life, I've a great mind to marry the girl myself!

Capt. Abs. I am entirely at your disposal, sir; if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the aunt;

or, if you should change your mind, and take the old lady,—'tis the same to me, I'll marry the niece.

Sir Anth. Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or—but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie, I'm sure it must—come, now, damn your demure face! come, confess, Jack, you have been lying—han't you? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey?—I'll never forgive you, if you han't been lying, and playing the hypocrite.

Capt. Abs. I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty, which I bear to you, should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty! But, come along with me, I'll write a note to Mrs. Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethian torch to you—come along, I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back, stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't, 'egad, I'll marry the girl myself! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

JULIA'S *Dressing Room.*

FAULKLAND.

Faulk. They told me Julia would return directly; I wonder she is not yet come!—How mean does this captious, unsatisfied, temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment! What tender, honest joy, sparkled in her eyes, when we met! How delicate was the warmth of her expressions!—I was ashamed to appear less happy, though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulations: Yet

I must be satisfied that she has not been so very happy in my absence. She is coming—Yes, I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the moments of her stay.

Enter JULIA.

Julia. I had not hoped to see you again so soon.

Faulk. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome, restrained as we were, by the presence of a third person?

Julia. Oh, Faulkland! when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation.

Faulk. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia. I was rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health: Sure I had no cause for coldness?

Julia. Nay, then, I see you have taken something ill: You must not conceal from me what it is.

Faulk. Well, then, shall I own to you, that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped, by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire? on your mirth—your singing—dancing—and I know not what! For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment, in your absence, as a treason to constancy. The mutual tear, that steals down the cheek of parting lovers, is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Julia. Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teasing, minute, caprice? Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh, in your breast, against my tried affection?

Faulk. They have no weight with me, Julia: No, no, I am happy, if you have been so—yet only say, that you did not sing with mirth—say, that you thought of Faulkland in the dance.

Julia. I never can be happy in your absence. If I wear a countenance of content, it is to show, that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth. If I seemed sad, it were to make malice triumph, and say, that I had fixed my heart on one, who left me to lament his roving, and my own credulity. Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you, when I say, that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

Faulk. You were ever all goodness to me! Oh, I am a brute, when I but admit a doubt of your true constancy!

Julia. If ever without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affections veering, but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity, and base ingratitude!

Faulk. Ah, Julia! that last word is grating to me! I would I had no title to your gratitude! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps what you have mistaken for love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart!

Julia. For what quality must I love you?

Faulk. For no quality: To regard me for any quality of mind, or understanding, were only to esteem me! And for person—I have often wished myself deformed, to be convinced, that I owed no obligation there for any part of your affection.

Julia. Where nature has bestowed a show of nice attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it, as misplaced. I have seen men, who, in this vain article, perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

Faulk. Now, this is not well from you, Julia; I despise person in a man, yet, if thou loved me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

Julia. I see you are determined to be unkind—— The contract, which my poor father bound us in, gives you more than a lover's privilege.

Faulk. Again, Julia, you raise ideas, that feed and justify my doubts. I would not have been more free —no, I am proud of my restraint: Yet—yet, perhaps, your high respect alone for this solemn compact, has fettered your inclinations, which, else, had made a worthier choice.

Julia. Then try me now—Let us be free as strangers, as to what is past: My heart will not feel more liberty.

Faulk. There, now! so hasty, Julia! so anxious to be free! If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not loose your hold, even though I wished it!

Julia. Oh, you torture me to the heart! I cannot bear it!

Faulk. I do not mean to distress you: If I loved you less, I should never give you an uneasy moment. —But hear me,—All my fretful doubts arise from this—Women are not used to weigh, and separate, the motives of their affections: the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart. I would not boast, yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, or character, to found dislike on; my fortune, such, as few ladies could be charged with indiscretion in the match. O Julia! when love receives such countenance from prudence, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth.

Julia. I know not whither your insinuations would tend; but, as they seem pressing to insult me, I will spare you the regret of having done so—I have given you no cause for this! [*Exit, in Tears.*

Faulk. In tears! stay, Julia—stay but for a moment——The door is fastened! Julia! my soul! but for one moment!—I hear her sobbing! 'Sdeath!

what a brute am I, to use her thus!—Yet stay—Ay, she is coming now: how little resolution there is in woman! how a few soft words can turn them!—No, 'faith, she's not coming, either! Why, Julia, my love! say but, that you forgive me; come but to tell me that—now, this is being too resentful! stay, she is coming too; I thought she would—no steadiness in any thing! her going away must have been a mere trick then; she shan't see that I was hurt by it—I'll affect indifference: [*Hums a Tune, then listens.*]—— No, Z——ds! she's not coming, nor don't intend it, I suppose! This is not steadiness, but obstinacy! Yet I deserve it. What, after so long an absence, to quarrel with her tenderness! 'twas barbarous, and unmanly!—I should be ashamed to see her now.—I'll wait till her just resentment is abated, and, when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

MRS. MALAPROP'S *Lodgings.*

MRS. MALAPROP, *with a Letter in her Hand, and* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Mrs. M. Your being Sir Anthony's son, Captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Capt. Abs. Permit me to say, madam, that, as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair, at present, is the honour of being allied to Mrs. Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs. M. Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, Captain, you'll be seated. [*Sit.*] Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! few think, how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman! Men have no sense now, but for the worthless flower of beauty!

Capt. Abs. It is but too true, indeed, ma'am; yet, I fear our ladies should share the blame; they think our admiration of beauty so great, that knowledge, in them, would be superfluous. Thus, like garden trees, they seldom show fruit, till time has robbed them of the more specious blossom: Few, like Mrs. Malaprop, and the orange tree, are rich in both at once!

Mrs. M. Sir, you overpower me with goodbreeding—He is the very pine apple of politeness! You are not ignorant, Captain, that this giddy girl has, somehow, contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eves-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows any thing of.

Capt. Abs. Oh, I have heard the silly affair before. I'm not at all prejudiced against her on that account, but it must be very distressing, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. M. Oh, it gives me the hydrostatics, to such a degree! I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day, I have interceded another letter from the fellow—I believe I have it in my pocket.

Capt. Abs. O, the devil! my last note! [*Aside.*

Mrs. M. Ay, here it is.

Capt. Abs. Ay, my note, indeed! O, the little traitress, Lucy! [*Aside.*

Mrs. M. There, perhaps you may know the writing. [*Gives him the Letter.*

Capt. Abs. I think I have seen the hand before—yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before.—

Mrs. M. Nay, but read it, Captain.

Capt. Abs. [Reads.] *My soul's idol, my adored Lydia!*—Very tender, indeed!

Mrs. M. Tender! ay, and profane too, o' my conscience!

Capt. Abs. *I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the more so as my new rival——*

Mrs. M. That's you, sir.

Capt. Abs. *Has universally the character of being an accomplished gentleman, and a man of honour.*—Well, that's handsome enough.

Mrs. M. Oh, the fellow has some design in writing so.

Capt. Abs. That he had, I'll answer for him, ma'am.

Mrs. M. But go on, sir—you'll see presently.

Capt. Abs. *As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon, who guards you*—Who can he mean by that?

Mrs. M. Me, sir—me—he means me there—what do you think now?—but go on a little further.

Capt. Abs. Impudent scoundrel!—*it shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance; as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand——*

Mrs. M. There, sir, an attack upon my language! what do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs.

Capt. Abs. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! let me see—*same ridiculous vanity——*

Mrs. M. You need not read it again, sir!

Capt. Abs. I beg pardon, ma'am—*does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration*—an impudent coxcomb!—*so that I have a scheme to see you shortly, with the old Harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interviews.*——Was ever such assurance!

Mrs. M. Did you ever hear any thing like it?—

He'll elude my vigilance, will he?—yes, yes!—ha! ha! he's very likely to enter these doors!—we'll try who can plot best!

Capt. Abs. So we will, ma'am—so we will.—Ha! ha! ha! a conceited puppy! ha! ha! ha!——Well, but Mrs. Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead.

Mrs. M. I am delighted with the scheme; never was any thing better perpetrated!

Capt. Abs. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now?—I should like to try her temper a little.

Mrs. M. Why, I don't know—I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind.—There is a decorum in these matters.

Capt. Abs. O Lord, she won't mind me!—only tell her, Beverley——

Mrs. M. Sir!

Capt. Abs. Gently, good tongue! [*Aside.*

Mrs. M. What did you say of Beverley?

Capt. Abs. Oh, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley, who was below—she'd come down fast enough then—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. M. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves—besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to see her—ha! ha!—Let him, if he can, I say again.—Lydia, come down here! [*Calling.*] He'll make me a go-between in their interviews!—ha! ha! ha! Come down, I say, Lydia!—I don't wonder at your laughing—ha! ha! ha! his impudence is truly ridiculous!

Capt. Abs. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, ma'am !—ha ! ha ! ha !

Mrs. M. The little hussy won't hear.—Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is—she shall know that Captain Absolute is come to wait on her.—And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Capt. Abs. As you please, ma'am.

Mrs. M. For the present, Captain, your servant—Ah, you've not done laughing yet, I see—elude my vigilance! yes, yes—Ha ! ha ! ha ! [*Exit.*

Capt. Abs. Ha ! ha ! ha ! one would think, now, that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security—but such is Lydia's caprice, that, to undeceive, were probably to lose her. I'll see whether she knows me.

[*Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the Pictures.*

Enter LYDIA.

Lydia. What a scene am I now to go through! surely nothing can be more dreadful than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's heart.—I have heard of girls persecuted, as I am, who have appealed, in behalf of their favoured lover, to the generosity of his rival: suppose I were to try it—there stands the hated rival—an officer too !—but, Oh, how unlike my Beverley !—I wonder he don't begin—truly, he seems a very negligent wooer! —quite at his ease, upon my word !—I'll speak first —Mr. Absolute !

Capt. Abs. Ma'am ! [*Turns round.*

Lydia. O Heavens ! Beverley !

Capt. Abs. Hush !—hush, my life !—softly ! be not surprised !

Lydia. I am so astonished ! and so terrified ! and

so overjoyed!—for Heaven's sake, how came you here?

Capt. Abs. Briefly—I have deceived your aunt—I was informed that my new rival was to visit here this evening, and, contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on her for Captain Absolute.

Lydia. Oh, charming!—And she really takes you for young Absolute?

Capt. Abs. Oh, she's convinced of it.

Lydia. Ha! ha! ha! I can't forbear laughing, to think how her sagacity is over-reached!

Capt. Abs. But we trifle with our precious moments—such another opportunity may not occur—then let me now conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and, with a licensed warmth, plead for my reward.

Lydia. Will you then, Beverley, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth?—that burden on the wings of love?

Capt. Abs. Oh, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness!—Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

Lydia. How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him!

Enter MRS. MALAPROP, *listening.*

Mrs. M. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside.*

Capt. Abs. So pensive, Lydia!—is then your warmth abated?

Mrs. M. Warmth abated?—so!—she has been in a passion, I suppose.

Lydia. No—nor ever can, while I have life.

Mrs. M. An illtemper'd little devil!—She'll be in a passion all her life—will she?

Lydia. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

Mrs. M. I am astonished at her assurance!—to his face—this to his face!

Capt. Abs. Thus, then, let me enforce my suit. [*Kneeling.*

Mrs. M. Ay—poor young man!—down on his knees, entreating for pity!—I can contain no longer.—Why, thou vixen!—I have overheard you.

Capt. Abs. Oh, confound her vigilance! [*Aside.*

Mrs. M. Captain Absolute—I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudenes.

Capt. Abs. So—all's safe, I find. [*Aside.*] I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady——

Mrs. M. O, there's nothing to be hoped for from her! she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile.

Lydia. Nay, madam, what do you charge me with now?

Mrs. M. Why, thou unblushing rebel—didn't you tell this gentleman to his face, that you loved another better?—didn't you say you never would be his?

Lydia. No, madam—I did not.

Mrs. M. Good Heavens, what assurance!—Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman!—Didn't you boast that Beverley—that stroller, Beverley—possessed your heart?—Tell me that, I say.

Lydia. 'Tis true, ma'am, and none but Beverley—

Mrs. M. Hold!—hold, assurance!—you shall not be so rude.

Capt. Abs. Nay, pray, Mrs. Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech:—she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you.

Mrs. M. You are too good, Captain—too amiably patient;—but come with me, miss—let us see you again soon, Captain—remember what we have fixed.

Capt. Abs. I shall, ma'am.

Mrs. M. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lydia. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev——

Mrs. M. Hussy! I'll choak the word in your throat!—Come along—come along.

[*Exeunt severally*—CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *kissing his Hand to* LYDIA, MRS. MALAPROP *stopping her from speaking.*

SCENE IV.

ACRES'S *Lodgings.*

ACRES *and* DAVID *discovered*—ACRES *as just dressed.*

Acres. Indeed, David—dress does make a difference, David.

David. 'Tis all in all, I think—difference! why, an' you were to go now to Clod Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you: Master Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes, and Mrs. Pickle would cry, "Lard, presarve me!" our dairy maid would come giggling to the door, and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat—Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house, but would bark, and I question whether Phillis would wag a hair of her tail!

Acres. Ay, David, there's nothing like polishing.

David. So I says of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

Acres. But, David, has Mr. De la Grace been here; I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.

David. I'll call again, sir.

Acres. Do—and see if there are any letters for me at the Post Office.

David. I will.—By the mass, I can't help looking at your head!—if I hadn't been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself! [*Exit.*

[ACRES *comes forward, practising a dancing Step.*

Acres. Sink, slide—coupee—Confound the first inventors of cotillions, say I!—they are as bad as algebra, to us country gentlemen—I can walk a minuet easy enough, when I am forced!—and I have been accounted a good stick in a country-dance.—Odds jiggs and tabors!—I never valued your cross-over two couple—figure in—right and left—and I'd foot it with e'er a captain in the country!—but these outlandish heathen allemandes and cotillions are quite beyond me!—I shall never prosper at them, that's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't understand their curs'd French lingo!—their *pàs* this, and *pàs* that, and *pàs* t'other!—damme! my feet don't like to be called paws!

Enter DAVID.

David. Here is Sir Lucius O'Trigger, to wait on you, sir.

Acres. Show him in. [*Exit* DAVID.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir L. Mr. Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir L. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

Acres. 'Faith, I have followed Cupid's Jack-a-Lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last!—In short, I have been very ill used, Sir Lucius. I don't chuse to mention names, but look on me as a very ill used gentleman.

Sir L. Pray, what is the case?—I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, Sir Lucius; I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival; and receive answer, that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of. This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill used.

Sir L. Very ill, upon my conscience!—Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why, there's the matter: she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath. —Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it.

Sir L. A rival in the case, is there?—and you think he has supplanted you unfairly?

Acres. Unfairly! to be sure he has. He never could have done it fairly.

Sir L. Then sure you know what is to be done!

Acres. Not I, upon my soul!

Sir L. We wear no swords here, but you understand me?

Acres. What! fight him!

Sir L. Ay, to be sure: what can I mean else?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir L. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another, than to fall in love with the same woman? Oh, by my soul, it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

Acres. Breach of friendship! Ay, ay; but I have

no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life.

Sir L. That's no argument at all—he has the less right then to take such a liberty.

Acres. 'Gad, that's true—I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius!—I fire apace! odds hilts and blades; I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side?

Sir L. What the devil signifies right, when your honour is concerned? do you think, Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul, they drew their broad swords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

Acres. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching!—I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say—odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

Sir L. Ah, my little friend! if I had Blunderbuss Hall here—I could show you a range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the New Room; every one of whom had killed his man!—For though the mansion house and dirty acres have slipped through my fingers, I thank Heaven our honour and the family pictures are as fresh as ever.

Acres. Oh, Sir Lucius! I have had ancestors too! —every man of them colonel or captain in the militia! —odds balls and barrels! say no more—I'm braced for it.—The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast?—Z—ds! as the man in the play says, "I could do such deeds"—

Sir L. Come, come; there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius—I must be in a rage—Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if

you love me.——Come, here's pen and paper. [*Sits down to write.*] I would the ink were red!—Indite, I say, indite!—How shall I begin! Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

Sir L. Pray, compose yourself.

Acres. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme!

Sir L. Pho! pho! do the thing decently, and like a christian. Begin now—*Sir*——

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir L. *To prevent the confusion that might arise*—

Acres. Well——

Sir L. *From our both addressing the same lady*——

Acres. Ay—there's the reason—*same lady*—— Well——

Sir L. *I shall expect the honour of your company*—

Acres. Z—ds! I'm not asking him to dinner!

Sir L. Pray, be easy.

Acres. Well, then, *honour of your company*——

Sir L. *To settle our pretensions*——

Acres. Well——

Sir L. Let me see—ay, King's Mead-fields will do——*in King's Mead-fields.*

Acres. So, that's done.—Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest—a hand and dagger, shall be the seal.

Sir L. You see, now, this little explanation will put a stop at once to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Ay, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir L. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time.—Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening if you can; then, let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir L. So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening.—I would do myself

the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expense of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman, to call him out.

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life, I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson!

Sir L. I shall be very proud of instructing you.—Well, for the present——but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do every thing in a mild and agreeable manner.—Let your courage be as keen, but, at the same time, as polished, as your sword.

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

ACRES'S *Lodgings.*

ACRES *and* DAVID.

David. Then, by the mass, sir, I would do no such thing!—ne'er a Sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say, when she hears o't!

Acres. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

David. Ay, by the mass! and I would be very careful of it, and I think in return my honour couldn't do less than to be very careful of me.

Acres. Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

David. I say, then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman.—Lookye, master, this honour seems to me to be a marvellous false friend, ay, truly, a very courtier like servant.—Put the case, I was a gentleman (which, thank God, no one can say of me); well—my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance.—So—we fight. (Pleasant enough that) Boh!—I kill him—(the more's my luck.) Now, pray, who gets the profit of it?—why, my honour.—But put the case that he kills me! by the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy.

Acres. No, David, in that case!—Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

David. Now, that's just the place were I could make a shift to do without it.

Acres. Z—ds! David, you are a coward!—It doesn't become my valour to listen to you.—What, shall I disgrace my ancestors?—Think of that, David—think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors?

David. Under favour, the surest way of not disgracing them, is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Lookye now, master, to go to them in such haste—with an ounce of lead in your brains—I should think it might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks'; but they are the last people I should chuse to have a visiting acquaintance with.

Acres. But, David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, very great danger, hey?—odds life! people often fight without any mischief done!

David. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!—Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow,

I warrant, with his d—ned double barrelled swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols! Lord bless us! it makes me tremble to think o't——those be such desperate bloody minded weapons! well, I never could abide them!—from a child I never could fancy them!—I suppose there an't been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Z—ds! I won't be afraid—odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid.——Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend, Jack Absolute, to carry it for me.

David. Ay, i'the name of mischief, let him be the messenger.—For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter!—it is, as I may say, a designing and malicious looking letter!—and I warrant smells of gunpowder, like a soldier's pouch!—Oons! I wouldn't swear it mayn't go off!

Acres. Out, you poltroon!—you han't the valour of a grasshopper.

David. Well, I say no more—'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod Hall!—but I ha' done.—How Phillis will howl, when she hears of it!—ay, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after!—and I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born! [*Whimpering.*

Acres. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

David. Good b'ye, master. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven. [*Exit* DAVID.

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. What's the matter, Bob?

Acres. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead!—If I hadn't the valour of St. George, and the dragon to boot—

Capt. Abs. But what did you want, with me, Bob?

Acres. Oh!—there— [*Gives him the Challenge.*

Capt. Abs. *To Ensign Beverley.* So—what's going on now! [*Aside.*] Well, what's this?

Acres. A challenge!

Capt. Abs. Indeed!—Why, you won't fight him; will you, Bob?

Acres. 'Egad, but I will, Jack.—Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage—and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Capt. Abs. But what have I to do with this?

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

Capt. Abs. Well, give it me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Capt. Abs. Not in the least—I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. You are very kind.——What it is to have a friend!—you couldn't be my second—could you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. Why no, Bob—not in this affair—it would not be quite so proper.

Acres. Well, then I must get my friend, Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack.

Capt. Abs. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the Captain.

Capt. Abs. I'll come instantly. Well, my little hero, success attend you. [*Going.*

Acres. Stay, stay, Jack.—If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow—will you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. To be sure I shall. I'll say you are a determined dog—hey, Bob?

Acres. Ay, do, do—and if that frightens him, 'egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a week; will you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. I will, I will; I'll say you are called, in the country, "Fighting Bob."

Acres. Right, right—'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life, if I clear my honour.

Capt. Abs. No!—that's very kind of you.

Acres. Why, you don't wish me to kill him, do you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. No, upon my soul, I do not. But a devil of a fellow, hey? [*Going.*

Acres. True, true—But stay—stay, Jack—you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before—a most devouring rage!

Capt. Abs. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

Capt. Abs. Ay, ay, "Fighting Bob."

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

MRS. MALAPROP'S *Lodgings.*

MRS. MALAPROP *and* LYDIA.

Mrs. M. Why, thou perverse one!—tell me what you can object to him?—Isn't he a handsome man?—tell me that.—A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

Lydia. She little thinks whom she is praising! [*Aside.*] So is Beverley, ma'am.

Mrs. M. No caparisons, miss, if you please.—

Caparisons don't become a young woman.—No! Captain Absolute is indeed a fine gentleman.

Lydia. Ay, the Captain Absolute you have seen. [*Aside.*

Mrs. M. Then he's so well bred;—so full of alacrity, and adulation!—I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:—"Hesperian curls—the front of Job himself!—an eye, like March, to threaten at command!—a station, like Harry Mercury, new"—Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly.

Lydia. How enraged she'll be presently, when she discovers her mistake! [*Aside.*

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, ma'am.

Mrs. M. Show them up here. [*Exit* SERVANT.] Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman.—Show your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

Lydia. Madam, I have told you my resolution!—I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

[*Flings herself into a Chair, with her Face from the Door.*

Enter SIR ANTHONY *and* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Sir Anth. Here we are, Mrs. Malaprop; come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty,—and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow—I don't know what's the matter; but if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

Mrs. M. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair.—I am ashamed for the cause! Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you!—pay your respects!

[*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. I hope, madam, that Miss Languish has

reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance.—Now, Jack, speak to her. [*Aside to him.*

Capt. Abs. What the devil shall I do! [*Aside.*]—You see, sir, she won't even look at me, whilst you are here.—I knew she wouldn't!—I told you so—Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together!

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *seems to expostulate with his Father.*

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I wonder I ha'nt heard my aunt exclaim yet! sure she can't have looked at him! perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind.

Sir Anth. I say, sir, I won't stir a foot yet.

Mrs. M. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence over my niece is very small.—Turn round, Lydia, I blush for you! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself, that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son!—why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy—speak! [*Aside to him.*

Mrs. M. It is impossible, Sir Anthony, she can have any,—She will not say she has.—Answer, hussy! why don't you answer? [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.—Z—ds! sirrah! why don't you speak? [*Aside to him.*

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.—How strangely blind my aunt must be!

Capt. Abs. Hem! hem! Madam—hem! [ABSOLUTE *attempts to speak, then returns to* SIR ANTHONY]—'Faith! sir, I am so confounded!—and so—so—confused!—I told you I should be so, sir,—I knew it.—The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir Anth. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it?—Go up, and speak to her directly!

[ABSOLUTE *makes signs to* MRS. MALAPROP, *to leave them together.*

Mrs. M. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together?—Ah! you stubborn little vixen! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Not yet, ma'am, not yet!—what the devil are you at? unlock your jaws, sirrah, or— [*Aside to him.*

Capt. Abs. [*Draws near* LYDIA.] Now Heav'n send she may be too sullen to look round!—I must disguise my voice. [*Aside.—Speaks in a low hoarse tone.* —Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love?—Will not——

Sir Anth. What the devil ails the fellow?—Why don't you speak out?—not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsey!

Capt. Abs. The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—my modesty, quite choak me!

Sir Anth. Ah! your modesty again!—I'll tell you what, Jack; if you don't speak out directly, and glibly too, I shall be in such a rage!—Mrs. Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side-front.

[MRS. MALAPROP *seems to chide* LYDIA.

Capt. Abs. So!—all will out, I see!

[*Goes up to* LYDIA, *speaks softly.*

Be not surprised, my Lydia, suppress all surprise at present.

Lydia. [*Aside.*] Heav'ns! 'tis Beverley's voice!—Sure he can't have imposed on Sir Anthony too!

[*Looks round by degrees, then starts up,*

Is this possible!—my Beverley!—how can this be?—my Beverley?

Capt. Abs. Ah! 'tis all over! [*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Beverley!—the devil—Beverley!—What can the girl mean?—This is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs. M. For shame, hussy! for shame!—your

head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes!—beg Captain Absolute's pardon, directly.

Lydia. I see no Captain Absolute, but my loved Beverley!

Sir Anth. Z——ds! the girl's mad!—her brain's turned, by reading!

Mrs. M. O' my conscience, I believe so!—what do you mean by Beverley, hussy?—You saw Captain Absolute before to-day; there he is—your husband, that shall be.

Lydia. With all my soul, ma'am—when I refuse my Beverley——

Sir Anth. Oh! she's as mad as Bedlam!—or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick!—Come here, sirrah, who the devil are you?

Capt. Abs. 'Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect.

Sir Anth. Are you my son or not?—answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

Mrs. M. Ay, sir, who are you? O mercy! I begin to suspect!—

Capt. Abs. Ye powers of impudence, befriend me! [*Aside.*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself to be yours also, I hope my duty has always shown.—Mrs. Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer—and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew.—I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name, and a station, which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

Lydia. So!—there will be no elopement after all! [*Sullenly.*

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! To do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Capt. Abs. Oh, you flatter me, sir,—you compliment—'tis my modesty you know, sir—my modesty, that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however!—I'm glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog—I am——So this was your penitence, your duty, and obedience!—I thought it was d—n'd sudden—You never heard their names before, not you!—What, the Languishes of Worcestershire, hey?—if you could please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired!—Ah! you dissembling villain!—What! [*Pointing to* LYDIA.] she squints, don't she?—a little red haired girl!—hey?—Why, you hypocritical young rascal—I wonder you a'n't ashamed to hold up your head!

Capt. Abs. 'Tis with difficulty, sir—I am confused—very much confused, as you must perceive.

Mrs. M. O lud! Sir Anthony!—a new light breaks in upon me!—hey!—how! what! Captain, did you write the letters, then?—What!—am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of "an old weather-beaten she-dragon"—hey?—O mercy!—was it you that reflected on my parts of speech?

Capt. Abs. Dear sir! my modesty will be overpowered at last, if you don't assist me.—I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs. Malaprop, we must forget and forgive;—odds life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart, to be so good-humoured! and so gallant!—hey! Mrs. Malaprop!

Mrs. M. Well, Sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past;—so mind, young people—our retrospection will now be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together; Mrs. Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant!—Jack—isn't the cheek as I said, hey?—and the eye, you rogue!—and the lip—hey? Come,

Mrs. Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—theirs is the time of life for happiness!——"*Youth's the season made for joy*"—[*Sings.*]—hey!—Odds 'life! I'm in such spirits,—I don't know what I could not do!—Permit me, ma'am—[*Gives his Hand to* MRS. MALAPROP; [*Sings.*] Tol-de-rol—'gad I should like to have a little fooling myself—Tol-de-rol! de-rol! [*Exit singing, and handing* MRS. MALAPROP. LYDIA *sits sullenly in the Chair.*

Capt. Abs. So much thought bodes me no good [*Aside.*]—So grave, Lydia!

Lydia. Sir!

Capt. Abs. So! egad! I thought as much!—that damned monosyllable has froze me! [*Aside.*]—What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our friends' consent, as in our mutual vows——

Lydia. Friends' consent, indeed! [*Peevishly.*

Capt. Abs. Come, come, we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as——

Lydia. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

Capt. Abs. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the license, and——

Lydia. The license!—I hate license!

Capt. Abs. Oh, my love! be not so unkind!—thus let me entreat—— [*Kneeling.*

Lydia. Pshaw!—what signifies kneeling, when you know I must have you?

Capt. Abs. [*Rising.*] Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you.—If I have lost your heart,—I resign the rest.—'Gad, I must try what a little spirit will do. [*Aside.*

Lydia. [*Rising.*] Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly, imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud.—What, you have been treating me like a child!

—humouring my romance! and laughing, I suppose, at your success!

Capt. Abs. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me—only hear———

Lydia. So, while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all—behold my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation—and I am myself the only dupe at last! [*Walking about in a Heat.*]—But here, sir, here is the picture—Beverley's picture! [*Taking a Miniature from her Bosom.*] which I have worn, night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties!—There, sir, [*Flings it to him.*] and be assured, I throw the original from my heart as easily.

Capt. Abs. Nay, nay, ma'am, we will not differ as to that—here, [*Taking out a Picture.*] here is Miss Lydia Languish,—What a difference!—ay, there is the heavenly assenting smile, that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes!—those are the lips, which sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar!—and there the half resentful blush, that would have checked the ardour of my thanks.—Well, all that's past;—all over indeed!—There, madam—in beauty, that copy is not equal to you, but in my mind, its merit over the original, in being still the same, is such —that—I cannot find in my heart to part with it.

[*Puts it up again.*

Lydia. [*Softening.*] 'Tis your own doing, sir—I, I, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied.

Capt. Abs. Oh, most certainly—sure now, this is much better than being in love!—ha! ha! ha!—there's some spirit in this!—What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises;—all that's of no consequence, you know.—To be sure people will say, that Miss didn't know her own mind—but never mind that:—or, perhaps, they may be illnatured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady, and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

Lydia. There's no bearing this insolence!
[*Bursts into tears.*

Enter MRS. MALAPROP *and* SIR ANTHONY.

Mrs. M. [*Entering.*] Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing a while.

Lydia. This is worse than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate. [*Sobbing.*

Sir Anth. What the devil's the matter now!—Z—ds! Mrs. Malaprop, this is the oddest billing and cooing I ever heard!—but what the deuce is the meaning of it?—I'm quite astonished!

Capt. Abs. Ask the lady, sir.

Mrs. M. Oh, mercy!—I'm quite analys'd, for my part!—why Lydia, what is the reason of this?

Lydia. Ask the gentleman, ma'am.

Sir Anth. Z—ds! I shall be in a phrenzy!—why, Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you?

Mrs. M. Ay, sir, there's no more trick, is there?—you are not, like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once are you?

Capt. Abs. You'll not let me speak—I say the lady can account for this much better than I can.

Lydia. Ma'am, you once commanded me never to think of Beverley again—there is the man—I now obey you:—for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever. [*Exit* LYDIA.

Mrs. M. O mercy and miracles! what a turn here is—why sure, Captain, you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my niece?

Sir Anth. Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!—now I see it—Ha! ha! ha!—now I see it—you have been too lively, Jack.

Capt. Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word——

Sir Anth. Come, no lying, Jack—I'm sure 'twas so.

Mrs. M. O lud! Sir Anthony!—O fie, Captain.

Capt. Abs. Upon my soul, ma'am——

Sir Anth. Come, no excuses, Jack;—why your father, you rogue, was so before you:—the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient.—Ha! ha! ha! poor little Lydia!—why you've frightened her, you dog, you have!

Capt. Abs. By all that's good, sir——

Sir Anth. Z——ds! say no more, I tell you—Mrs. Malaprop shall make your peace.—You must make his peace, Mrs. Malaprop:—you must tell her, 'tis Jack's way—tell her, 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our family!—Come, away, Jack, ha! ha! ha! Mrs. Malaprop—a young villain!

[*Pushes him out.*

Mrs. M. Oh, Sir Anthony!—O fie, Captain.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.

The North Parade.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir L. I wonder where this Captain Absolute hides himself.—Upon my conscience!—these officers are always in one's way, in love affairs:—I remember I might have married Lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for a little rogue of a Major, who ran away with her before she could get sight of me!—And I wonder what it is the ladies can see in them, to be so fond of them—unless it be a touch of the old serpent in them, that makes the little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth.—Hah,

isn't this the captain coming?—'faith it is!—There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking! who the devil is he talking to? [*Steps aside.*

Enter CAPT. ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. To what fine purpose have I been plotting! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul!—a little gipsy!—I did not think her so d—n'd absurd either.—'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in all my life!—I could cut my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world!

Sir L. O, 'faith! I'm in the luck of it.—I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose—to be sure I'm just come in the nick! now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteely. [SIR LUCIUS *goes up to* ABSOLUTE.]—with regard to that matter, Captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Capt. Abs. Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant:—because, sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir L. That's no reason.—For, give me leave to tell you, a man may think an untruth, as well as speak one.

Capt. Abs. Very true, sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir L. Then, sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

Capt. Abs. Harkye, Sir Lucius, what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

Sir L. I humbly thank you, sir, for the quickness of your apprehension; [*Bowing.*] you have named the very thing I would be at.

Capt. Abs. Very well, sir,—I shall certainly not

baulk your inclinations——but I should be glad you would please to explain your motives.

Sir L. Pray, sir, be easy—the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel, as it stands—we should only spoil it, by trying to explain it.—However, your memory is very short—or you could not have forgot an affront you passed on me within this week.—So, no more, but name your time and place.

Capt. Abs. Well, sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better;—let it be this evening—here by the Spring Gardens.—We shall scarcely be interrupted.

Sir L. 'Faith! that same interruption, in affairs of this nature, shows very great ill breeding.——I don't know what's the reason, but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness.—However, if it's the same to you, Captain, I should take it as a particular kindness, if you'd let us meet in King's Mead-fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may dispatch both matters at once.

Capt. Abs. 'Tis the same to me, exactly,—A little after six, then, we will discuss this matter more seriously.

Sir L. If you please, sir; there will be very pretty small-sword light, though it won't do for a long shot.—So that matter's settled! and my mind's at ease. [*Exit.*

Enter FAULKLAND, *meeting* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. Well met.—I was going to look for you, —Oh, Faulkland! all the demons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vexed, that if I had not the prospect of a resource, in being knocked o'the head by and by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

Faulk. What can you mean ?——Has Lydia changed her mind ?—I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

Capt. Abs. Ay, just as the eyes do of a person who squints :—when her love eye was fixed on me—t'other—her eye of duty, was finely obliqued :—but when duty bid her point that the same way—off t'other turned on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

Faulk. But what's the resource you——

Capt. Abs. Oh, to wind up the whole, a goodnatured Irishman here, has [*Mimicking* SIR LUCIUS.] begged leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat—and I mean to indulge him—that's all.

Faulk. 'Prythee, be serious.

Capt. Abs. 'Tis fact, upon my soul.—Sir Lucius O'Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet him this evening, at six o'clock,—'tis on that account I wished to see you—you must go with me.

Faulk. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure.—Sir Lucius shall explain himself—and I dare say matters may be accommodated :—but this evening, did you say ?—I wish it had been any other time.

Capt. Abs. Why ? there will be light enough :—there will (as Sir Lucius says) " be very pretty small-sword light, though it will not do for a long shot"—Confound his long shots !

Faulk. But I am myself a good deal ruffled, by a difference I have had with Julia—my vile, tormenting temper, has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

Capt. Abs. By Heavens, Faulkland, you don't deserve her !

Enter SERVANT: *gives* FAULKLAND *a Letter.*

Faulk. O Jack! this is from Julia; I dread to open it; I fear it may be to take a last leave—perhaps to bid me return her letters, and restore—Oh, how I suffer for my folly!

Capt. Abs. Here—let me see—[*Takes the Letter, and opens it.*] Ay, a final sentence, indeed! 'tis all over with you, 'faith!

Faulk. Nay, Jack, don't keep me in suspense.

Capt. Abs. Hear, then.

As I am convinced, that my dear Faulkland's own reflections have already upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I will not add a word on the subject.—I wish to speak with you, as soon as possible.

Yours ever, and truly,

JULIA.

There's stubbornness and resentment for you! [*Gives him the Letter.*] Why, man, you don't seem one whit the happier at this!

Faulk. Oh, yes, I am—but—but—

Capt. Abs. Confound your buts! You never hear any thing, that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately damn it with a but!

Faulk. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own, honestly—don't you think, there is something forward, something indelicate, in this haste to forgive? Women should never sue for reconciliation; that should always come from us: They should retain their coldness till wooed to kindness, and their pardon, like their love, should "Not unsought, be won."

Capt. Abs. I have not patience to listen to you—thou'rt incorrigible! so say no more on the subject. I must go to settle a few matters—let me see you before six, remember, at my lodgings. A poor, industrious devil, like me, who have toiled, and drudged, and plotted, to gain my ends, and am, at last, disap-

pointed by other people's folly, may, in pity, be allowed to swear and grumble a little! but a captious sceptic, in love; a slave to fretfulness and whim, who has no difficulties but of his own creating, is a subject more fit for ridicule, than compassion! [*Exit.*

Faulk. I feel his reproaches: yet, I would not change this too exquisite nicety, for the gross content with which he tramples on the thorns of love. His engaging me in this duel, has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue: I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness; if her love prove pure, and sterling ore, my name will rest on it with honour! and, once I've stamped it there, I'll lay aside my doubts for ever! [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

JULIA'S *Dressing Room.*

JULIA.

Julia. How this message has alarmed me! what dreadful accident can he mean? why such charge to be alone? O Faulkland! how many unhappy moments, how many tears, have you cost me!

Enter FAULKLAND.

What means this? why this caution, Faulkland?

Faulk. Alas, Julia! I am come to take a long farewell!

Julia. Heav'ns! what do you mean?

Faulk. You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited: Nay, start not; the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me: I left you, fretful and passionate,—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel; the event is, that I must fly this kingdom, instantly!—Oh, Julia, had I been so fortunate as to have called you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment!

Julia. My soul is oppressed with sorrow, at the nature of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought, that I could now chase from your bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love. My heart has long known no other guardian; I now entrust my person to your honour—we will fly together: When safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled, and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then, on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a cherub's hand, shall smooth the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

Faulk. O Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude!—Would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you, beside his solitary love?

Julia. I ask not a moment.—No, Faulkland, I have loved you for yourself: and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement, which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love.—But let us not linger—Perhaps this delay———

Faulk. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark: Yet am I grieved to think, what numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

Julia. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act? I know not whether 'tis so, but, sure, that alone, can never make us unhappy.—The little I have, will be sufficient to support us, and exile never should be splendid.

Faulk. Ay, but in such an abject state of life, my wounded pride, perhaps, may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose, companion, beyond your patience to endure.

Julia. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit, to watch over, and console you: One, who by bearing your infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you, so to bear the evils of your fortune.

Faulk. Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and, with this useless device, I throw away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last, unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

Julia. Has no such disaster happened, as you related?

Faulk. I am ashamed to own, that it was all pretended; yet, in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault, which never can be repeated: But sealing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of Heaven, receive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly, by years of tender adoration.

Julia. Hold, Faulkland!—that you are free from a crime, which I before feared to name, Heaven knows, how sincerely I rejoice! These are tears of thankfulness for that! But, that your cruel doubts should

have urged you to an imposition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang, more keen than I can express!

Faulk. By Heav'ns! Julia———

Julia. Yet hear me—My father loved you, Faulkland! and you preserved the life, that tender parent gave me! in his presence, I pledged my hand—joyfully pledged it, where, before, I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seemed to me, that Providence had, in Faulkland, shown me whither to transfer, without a pause, my grateful duty, as well as my affection: Hence, I have been content to bear from you, what pride and delicacy would have forbid me, from another. I will not upbraid you, by repeating, how you have trifled with my sincerity.—

Faulk. I confess it all! yet, hear——

Julia. After such a year of trial, I might have flattered myself, that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel, as unnecessary! I now see, that it is not in your nature, to be content, or confident, in love. With this conviction, I never will be yours. While I had hopes, that my persevering attention, and unreproaching kindness, might, in time, reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gained a dearer influence over you; but I will not furnish you with a licensed power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expense of one, who never would contend with you.

Faulk. Nay, but, Julia, by my soul and honour!—If, after this——

Julia. But one word more.—As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another. I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest blessing I can ask of Heaven to send you, will be, to charm you from that unhappy temper, which, alone, has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement. All I request of you, is, that you will yourself reflect upon this infir-

mity; and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of, let it not be your least regret, that it lost you the love of one, who would have followed you in beggary through the world! [*Exit.*

Faulk. She's gone!—for ever!—There was an awful resolution in her manner, that rivetted me to my place. O fool!—dolt!—barbarian! Cursed as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow wretches, kind fortune sent a Heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side!—I must now haste to my appointment.—Well, my mind is tuned for such a scene!—I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse the tale, my cursed folly put me upon forging here. O Love!—tormenter!—fiend! whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them, but meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness! [*Exit.*

Enter MAID *and* LYDIA.

Maid. My mistress, ma'am, I know, was here, just now—perhaps she is only in the next room. [*Exit.*

Lydia. Heigho!—Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe, one lecture from my grave cousin, will make me recall him.

Enter JULIA.

Oh, Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation! Lud, child! what's the matter with you? You have been crying!—I'll be hanged if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you!

Julia. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness:—Something has flurried me a little.—Nothing that you can guess at.

Lydia. Ah! whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them.—You know who Beverley proves to be?

Julia. I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr. Faulkland had before informed me of the whole affair.

Lydia. So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one! but I don't care, I'll never have him.

Julia. Nay, Lydia——

Lydia. Why, is it not provoking, when I thought we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last?—There had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements!—so becoming a disguise!—so amiable a ladder of ropes!—Conscious moon—four horses—Scotch parson—with such surprise to Mrs. Malaprop! and such paragraphs in the newspapers!—Oh, I shall die with disappointment!

Julia. I don't wonder at it.

Lydia. Now—sad reverse!—what have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation, with a bishop's license, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar; or, perhaps, be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly, fat clerk, ask the consent of every butcher in the parish, to join John Absolute, and Lydia Languish, spinster! Oh, that I should live, to hear myself called spinster!

Julia. Melancholy, indeed!

Lydia. How mortifying, to remember the dear, delicious shifts, I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow!—How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden, stuck, like a dripping statue!—There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough, so pathetically! he shivering with cold, and I with apprehension! and while the freezing blast numbed our joints, how warmly would he press me, to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour!—Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love!

Julia. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you; but it suits more the situation of my mind, at present, earnestly to entreat you, not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your caprice, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

Lydia. Oh, Lud! what has brought my aunt here?

Enter MRS. MALAPROP *and* DAVID.

Mrs. M. So! so! here's fine work!—here's fine suicide, paracide, and simulation, going on in the fields! and Sir Anthony not to be found, to prevent the antistrophe!

Julia. For Heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this?

Lydia. Oh, patience!—Do, ma'am, for Heaven's sake! tell us what is the matter?

Mrs. M. Why, murder's the matter! slaughter's the matter! killing's the matter!—But he can tell you the perpendiculars.

Julia. Do speak, friend, [*To* DAVID.

David. Lookye, my lady——by the mass, there's mischief going on. Folks don't use to meet for amusement, with fire arms, firelocks, fire engines, fire screens, fire office, and the devil knows what other crackers beside!—This, my lady, I say, has an angry favour.—To be sure, Captain Absolute——

Julia. But who is there beside Captain Absolute, friend?

David. My poor master—under favour for mentioning him first. You know me, my lady—I am David—and my master, of course, is, or was, 'Squire Acres.—Then comes 'Squire Faulkland.

Julia. Do, ma'am, let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief.

Mrs. M. Oh, fie! it would be very inelegant in us: should only participate things.

David. Ah, do, Mrs. Aunt, save a few lives!—they are desperately given, believe me,—Above all, there is that bloodthirsty Philistine, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs. M. Sir Lucius O'Trigger!—O mercy! have they drawn poor little dear Sir Lucius into the scrape?—Why, how you stand, girl! you have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire putrefactions!

Lydia. What are we to do, madam?

Mrs. M. Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief!—here, friend—you can show us the place?

David. Oh, never fear; we shall find it out by the report of the pistols. [*Exeunt, he talking.*

SCENE II.

King's Mead-fields.

SIR LUCIUS *and* ACRES, *with Pistols.*

Acres. By my valour, then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance—Odds levels and aims!—I say, it is a good distance.

Sir L. Is it, for muskets, or small field-pieces? upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave these things to me.—Stay, now—I'll show you. [*Measures Paces along the Stage.*] There, now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Z—ds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir L. 'Faith, then, I suppose you would aim at him best of all, if he was out of sight!

Acres. No, Sir Lucius—but I should think forty, or eight and thirty yards——

Sir L. Pho! pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no!—by my valour, there is no merit in killing him so near! Do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot:—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me!

Sir L. Well—the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius—but I don't understand——

Sir L. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and, if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say, it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A quietus!

Sir L. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you chuse to be pickled, and sent home? —or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

Sir L. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir L. Ah, that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing.—Pray, now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files! I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius, there—[*Puts himself in an Attitude.*]—a side-front, hey?—Odd, I'll make myself small enough—I'll stand edgeways.

Sir L. Now, you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—— [*Levelling at him.*

Acres. Z—ds, Sir Lucius! are you sure it is not cocked?

Sir L. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir L. Pho! be easy—Well, now, if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side, 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir L. But, there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him.*] let me see the broad side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do you any harm at all.

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

Sir L. Ay, may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Lookye! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one—so, by my valour! I will stand edge ways.

Sir L. [*Looking at his Watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—hah! no, 'faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey!—what!—coming!——

Sir L. Ay, who are those yonder, getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them, indeed! well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir L. Run!

Acres. No, I say—we won't run, by my valour!

Sir L. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing, nothing, my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did.

Sir L. O fie! consider your honour.

Acres. Ay, true—my honour—do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word, or two every now and then, about my honour.

Sir L. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*

Acres. Sir Lucius, if I wan't with you, I should almost think I was afraid—if my valour should leave me! valour will come and go.

Sir L. Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes, my valour is certainly going! it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were, at the palms of my hands!

Sir L. Your honour—your honour. Here they are.

Acres. Oh, mercy!—now, that I was safe at Clod Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter FAULKLAND *and* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Sir L. Gentlemen, your most obedient—hah!—what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account?

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Capt. Abs. Harkye, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir L. Well, Mr. Acres—I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly. So Mr. Beverley, [*To* FAULKLAND.] if you chuse your weapons, the Captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. My weapons, sir!

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr. Faulkland; these are my particular friends!

Sir L. What, sir, did not you come here to fight Mr. Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir L. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there are three of us come

on purpose for the game—you won't be so cantanckerous as to spoil the party, by sitting out.

Capt. Abs. Oh pray, Faulkland, fight, to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on the matter.

Acres. No, no, Mr. Faulkland—I'll bear my disappointment like a christian—Lookye, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir L. Observe me, Mr. Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody, and you came here to fight him. Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Why, no, Sir Lucius, I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face? If he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

Capt. Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case. The person, who assumed that name, is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir L. Well, this is lucky. Now you have an opportunity——

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend, Jack Absolute!—not if he were fifty Beverleys! Z—ds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me be so unnatural!

Sir L. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! odds backs and abettors; I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you a snug lying in the Abbey here; or pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss-hall, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir L. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward; coward was the word, by my valour!

Sir L. Well, sir?

Acres. Lookye, Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word coward—Coward may be said in joke—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls——

Sir L. Well, sir?

Acres. —I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir L. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Capt. Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend, Acres.—He is a most determined dog—called in the country, fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a week; don't you Bob?

Acres. Ay—at home!—

Sir L. Well, then, Captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor, [*Draws his Sword.*]—and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him?

Capt. Abs. Come then, sir [*Draws.*] since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply.

Enter SIR ANTHONY, DAVID, *and the* WOMEN.

David. Knock 'em all down, sweet Sir Anthony; knock down my master in particular—and bind his hands over to their good behaviour!

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a phrenzy—how came you in a duel, sir?

Capt. Abs. 'Faith, sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I; 'twas he called on me, and you know, sir, I serve his Majesty.

Sir Anth. Here's a pretty fellow! I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me, he serves his Majesty!—Z—ds! sirrah, then how durst you draw the King's sword against one of his subjects?

Capt. Abs. Sir, I tell you, that gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons.

Sir Anth. Gad, sir! how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons?

Sir L. Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Z—ds, Jack! how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

Mrs. M. Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies—Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so?—Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

Capt. Abs. For fear I should be killed, or escape, ma'am?

Mrs. M. Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinced; speak, child.

Sir L. With your leave, ma'am, I must put in a word here—I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence—Now mark—

Lydia. What is it you mean, sir?

Sir L. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now—this is no time for trifling.

Lydia. 'Tis true, sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections.

Capt. Abs. Oh, my little angel, say you so?—Sir Lucius, I perceive there must be some mistake here—with regard to the affront, which you affirm I have given you, I can only say, that it could not have been intentional. And as you must be convinced, that I should not fear to support a real injury—you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—I ask your pardon.—But for this lady, while honoured with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever.

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy.

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to any thing in the world—and if I can't get a wife, without fighting for her, by my valour! I'll live a bachelor.

Sir L. Captain, give me your hand—an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation—and as for the lady—if she chuses to deny her own hand-writing here— [*Takes out Letters.*

Mrs. M. Oh, he will dissolve my mystery!—Sir Lucius, perhaps, there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate——

Sir L. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

Lydia. Indeed, Sir Lucius, I am not.

[LYDIA *and* ABSOLUTE *walk aside.*

Mrs. M. Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes, I am Delia.

Sir L. You Delia—pho! pho! be easy.

Mrs. M. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke—those letters are mine—When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir L. Mrs. Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick upon me, I am equally beholden to you.—And, to show you I ~~am~~ not ungrateful, Captain Absolute, since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Capt. Abs. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's my friend, fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir L. Hah! little valour—here, will you make your fortune?

Acres. Odds wrinkles! No.—But give me your hand, Sir Lucius, forget and forgive; but if ever I give you a chance of pickling me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs. Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs. M. O Sir Anthony!—men are all barbarians— [*All retire but* JULIA *and* FAULKLAND.

Julia. He seems dejected and unhappy—not sullen—there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman! how true should be your judgment, when your resolution is so weak!

Faulk. Julia!—how can I sue for what I so little deserve? I dare not presume—yet Hope is the child of penitence.

Julia. Oh! Faulkland, you have not been more faulty in your unkind treatment of me, than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for yours.

Faulk. Now I shall be blest indeed!——

[SIR ANTHONY *comes forward.*

Sir Anth. What's going on here?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant.——Come, Julia, I never interfered before; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.—All the faults I have ever seen in my friend, Faulkland, seemed to proceed from what he calls the delicacy and warmth of his affection for you—There, marry him directly, Julia, you'll find he'll mend surprisingly! [*The rest come forward.*

Sir L. Come now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better——

Acres. You are right, Sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy—Mr. Faulkland, the same.—Ladies,—come now, to show you I'm neither vexed nor angry, odds tabors and pipes! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour, to the New Rooms—and I insist on your all meeting me there.

Sir Anth. Gad! sir, I like your spirit; and at night we single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop.

Faulk. Our partners are stolen from us, Jack—I hope, to be congratulated by each other—yours for having checked in time the errors of an ill directed imagination, which might have betrayed an innocent heart; and mine, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one, who by it made wretched whom he loved most, and tortured the heart he ought to have adored.

Capt. Abs. Well, Jack, we have both tasted the bitters, as well as the sweets, of love—with this difference only, that you always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while I———

Lydia. Was always obliged to me for it, hey! Mr. Modesty!—But come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unalloyed as general.

Julia. Then let us study to preserve it so: and while hope pictures to us a flattering scene of happiness, let us deny its pencil those colours, which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts diffusing happiness would unite their fortunes, virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest, hurtless flowers; but ill judging passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends most, when its leaves are dropt!

THE END.